

## Message Text

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51

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCI-06 SCEM-02 INT-08 FPC-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 EB-11

FAA-00 CAB-09 DOTE-00 COME-00 OMB-01 DRC-01 /175 W

----- 107299

R 151536Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 145

INFO AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION OECD

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

UNCLAS VIENNA 8482

EO: 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, AU

SUBJ: SUDDEN GAS SHORTAGE IN VIENNA AREA

REF: VIENNA 8414

SUMMARY. GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO DISCOURAGE HOARDING (REFTEL) BOOMERANGED OVER WEEKEND BY PRECIPITATING PRECISELY WHAT THEY WERE INTENDED TO PREVENT: RUN ON AVAILABLE GAS AND HEATING OIL SUPPLIES WHICH RESULTED IN 70 PERCENT OF VIENNA'S GAS STATIONS BEING CLOSED SUNDAY. END SUMMARY.

1. GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRECAUTIONARY STEPS TO CONSERVE FUEL, COMING JUST BEFORE WEEKEND, RESULTED IN RUSH TO GAS STATIONS IN VIENNA AREA. PROHIBITION AGAINST FILLING CANS PROVED NO PROBLEM TO HOARDERS; THEY SIMPLY FILLED THEIR TANKS, SIPHONED OFF GAS AT HOME INTO CONTAINERS AND RETURNED TO STATIONS TO RE-  
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PEAT PROCESS. RESULT WAS THAT STATIONS QUICKLY RAN OUT OF GAS IN

MANY CASES OR LIMITED SALES TO 5-10 LITERS.

2. SIMILAR ARTIFICIAL SHORTAGE DEVELOPED WITH HEATING OIL. SHORTAGES WERE EXACERBATED BY FACT THAT GAS AND OIL SUPPLY TRUCKS WERE NOT IN SERVICE ON WEEKEND.

3. SITUATION DESCRIBED ABOVE WAS APPARENTLY CONFINED LARGELY TO VIENNA AND NEARBY AREAS. VERY FEW CASES OF GAS STATIONS RUNNING OUT OF SUPPLIES REPORTED FROM WESTERN AUSTRIA.

4. TRADE MINISTER HAS NOW ISSUED STATEMENTS DESIGNED TO REASSURE POPULATION THAT AT LEAST FOR SHORT TERM SUFFICIENT SUPPLIES OF GAS AND HEATING OIL ARE AVAILABLE TO MEET NORMAL DEMAND. GOVERNMENT HOPES SITUATION WILL RETURN TO NORMAL THIS WEEK, NOW THAT GAS AND OIL TRUCKS ARE AGAIN ON ROAD.

5. GOVERNMENT, FACED WITH PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS NEXT WEEK, IS COMING UNDER SHARP ATTACK FROM OPPOSITION PARTIES, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY GROUPS FOR NOT HAVING ATTEMPTED SOONER TO BUILD UP GREATER RESERVES OF FUEL SUPPLIES IN AUSTRIA.

6. AUSTRIAN AIRLINES (AUA) MET WITH FUEL SUPPLIERS LATE LAST WEEK AND LATER ANNOUNCED IT HAD SUFFICIENT FUEL SUPPLIES ON HAND FOR 10 DAYS TO 2 WEEKS. AUA DECIDED AGAINST LIMITING FLIGHTS FOR TIME BEING AND IS OPERATING ALL FLIGHTS ON NORMAL SCHEDULES. WE UNDERSTAND FROM COMPANY OFFICIAL THAT AUA PLANES ARE REFUELING TO EXTENT POSSIBLE AT AIRPORTS OUTSIDE AUSTRIA.MOWINCKEL

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